

## Bundi Jogi Naidu.

The squire of Kommanapalli according to the Hindu notion was of a religious turn of mind. He erected a small temple about eight or ten feet square in which was placed the image of his god, before which the villagers were accustomed to place offerings of food and to perform various religious ceremonies.

One morning about sixty years ago in this idolatrous village, the squire's wife presented her husband with a little brown baby boy with large, clear, black eyes. The family name was Bundi. To the little boy they gave the name of Jogi. Since in this country the surname precedes the given name the baby was called Bundi Jogi. On the death of his father he became squire or Naidu of the village, then this last title was added to the other two, which in full was Bundi Jogi Naidu.

During his early years little Jogi attended the village school and seems to have become strongly attached to his teacher, who subsequently became a believer in Christ, and was largely instrumental in leading his pupil into the same faith. While only a lad young Jogi began to exhibit signs of independence of thought. He would discourse with the village elders on the futility of idol worship. So pronounced did he become in his opposition to idolatry and to many other customs of his people, that it began to be whispered among all the old dames in the place, that if the squire's eldest son could not be induced to abandon the course he was pursuing he would prove a down right disgrace to his family and to the whole community.

Together with his teacher he was accustomed to visit the villages far and near, to study his own religion as exhibited at festival times when many degrading and immoral rites were performed in the name worship. What was witnessed in these journeys left a deep impression on the mind of the young man. He became convinced that idolatry was responsible to a large degree for the low moral condition of his people.

When about twenty-five years of age a plan was formed to give the villagers an object lesson on the foolishness of idol worship. About twelve or one o'clock on the night previous to a special religious festival, he arose and taking in his hand a huge knife-like axe proceeded noiselessly to the little temple on the outskirts of the village. Unobserved he entered and with one blow split in twain the wooden god, then quickly taking up the pieces cast them into the peaceful river near by. He carefully closed the door and so far as possible having removed all outward traces of his visit to the temple, returned to his home to await the effect of the morrow's surprise.

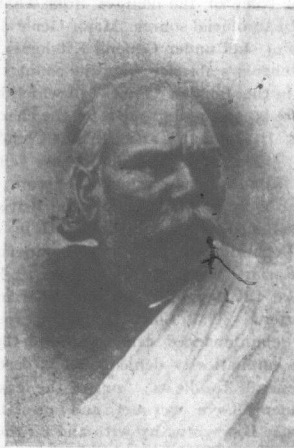
It is a man of more than ordinary natural courage who would have the nerve to perform such a deed. To a person reared in America it would be a matter of no consequence, he could hew down an idol with no more concern than though it were an ordinary log of fire wood. But with the people of this country it is a very different thing. They have been taught from infancy, with all the harrowing tales that superstition could invent, that in the image are vested the power of life and death and the destiny of human beings.

All alone to wonder through a grave yard on a rainy night, a task from which even many Americans would shrink, would not require one tithe the courage which one of these people must summon before entering a temple to lay sacrilegious hands upon the idol.

In the morning the people assembled in one of the passage ways of the village, which hardly deserve the name of streets, quite near the squire's house. Here they formed in procession and headed by drummers, proceeded with their offerings to the temple, while Bundi Jogi sat on his father's verandah apparently engaged in some trivial work. One can scarcely imagine the wild excitement that prevailed when it was discovered that the god was missing. Although it was firmly believed that in some mysterious way infinite power concerning the destinies of others was committed to the idol, it never occurred to anyone that it could of itself run away. They knew that some one had removed it. Just at that moment it was fortunate for the young man who was sitting on the veranda that there was no one who could give witness against him. With mingled feelings of fear and rage they left the empty temple. Many suspicious glances were cast at Bundi Jogi as the perpetrator of this atrocious crime against their god. When accused he would merely laugh and reply that a god which could not defend himself must have but little power to work either good or ill to others. Many expected that great calamities would follow immediately. However, as nothing unusual occurred, the excitement wore away. The lesson proved effectual. Never again was an idol brought, and soon the little temple fell in ruins. At the present time one can find in the village, scarcely a man who will acknowledge that he is an idolater.

Bundi Jogi on hearing that his former teacher, after becoming a Christian, was suffering great privations, wrote a letter asking him to visit him. The invitation was accepted and for several years he spent the greater part of the time at Kommanapalli. Here teacher and

pupil talked much of the new faith. However it was not until the lapse of eight or ten years that the latter decided to follow Christ in baptism. When the decision was reached he applied to Bro. Armstrong to baptize him. The missionary went and pitched his tent under some trees near the river, but the candidate failed to appear, not because he had suddenly lost faith in Christ, but that the power that bound him to caste was stronger than he supposed. The severing of all his social relations, when the moment for decision came, was a sacrifice greater than he was prepared to make. No rest of soul came to the convicted sinner. After a short time he again applied for baptism. On this occasion Bro. Armstrong took along with him a body of police from Parla Kimeddi, in order that acts of violence might be prevented. This proved a wise precaution. But for the presence of these armed officers of the law it is probable that neither missionary nor candidate would have escaped uninjured from the hands of the infuriated mob. Amidst cries and shouting and the flourishing of clubs the first member of the Akulatampara church was baptized. Almost immediately after the ceremony the crowd rushed in and seized him and carried him back to the village and to his heathen home where he remained for two years with his Hindu relatives and to outward appearances was one of their number in spirit.



BUNDI JOGI NAIDU.

He has told in recent years how that when Bro. Armstrong at his invitation came the second time, he was strongly tempted to keep in hiding again, but his sense of self-respect came to his rescue. He thought of what the missionary would think of him should he turn back again. He could not bear to be thought a coward, neither could he make up his mind to endure the persecution which he knew must follow should he persist in obeying Christ; consequently he entered into a plot with a few of his nearest friends who were to keep the matter secret. They were to attend at his baptism, and immediately after the ceremony were to seize and carry him off to the village. By this device he thought to escape persecution and also preserve his honor among the people.

Some may be disposed to regard this kind of conduct as exceedingly reprehensible. It might justly be regarded as such in one who was reared in a Christian land. A few years residence in this country teaches one to soften down one's judgment a good deal and to understand how it was that Abraham and Isaac lied about their wives, and Jacob deceived his father-in-law and still were blessed of God. Idolatry does not have much power to produce in the sinner a sense of guilt before God. The little light that comes into the mind and heart of a new convert is not sufficient to overcome immediately the influence of all his past history. The order of the procedure in Christ's last command comes with great force to the worker in this country: First, "make disciples"; second, "teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you."

About two years after his baptism his heathen wife died. It was then that he made the final break with hinduism and identified himself with the Christian church. During the two years interval the villagers had become so accustomed to hear of Christianity and to regard Bundi Jogi Naidu as a kind of half Christian that there was no special demonstration of resistance at the final separation from the religion of his fathers. During the twenty years of his professed Christian career the Naidu, as we always called him, was the most prominent figure in the little church at Akulatampara, a village on the opposite side of the river from his own. He was not always in the heights of spiritual rejoicing, yet was there scarcely a time when his voice was not heard in the prayer and conference meetings. He was possessed of a strong mind and a resolute will and a rather hasty temper, which in childhood, according to the custom of the country, he had not been taught to control. This on various occasions proved a stumbling-block to him.

After making full allowance for all his imperfections there was much worthy of admiration. With his natural sternness there was united the tenderness of a child. A few kind words would melt him to tears and lead him to repentance when he had given way to temper. A notable instance of this occurred a few months before his death. He seemed to lose himself entirely in a fit of rage over a false rumor reflecting on his chastity and on that of certain members of his family. Without pausing a moment for consideration, he took it for granted that there was a plot to injure him. For several days he stormed at those whom he thought were implicated in it. Certain of his neighbors became so terrified that they fled from the village. On hearing of the trouble I visited him. Almost as soon as we met he burst into tears and said, "They have taken away my house." Meaning that the hitherto good reputation of his family had been destroyed. We read the Bible and talked for several hours. Every now and then during our conversation he would weep like a child. Finally when we went apart into a little room to pray, his confession before God was more in sobs than words. He could scarcely form a sentence. His repentance seemed deep and sincere. From that day until his death it was a great pleasure to witness his increased humility of spirit. He knew also how to forgive. He thought that his son's wife was one of the chief instruments in trying to bring about his ruin. Nevertheless when she fell sick a few weeks afterwards he had her brought to Parla Kimeddi for medical treatment, and when her own husband refused to remain and care for her, he himself and his wife stayed by her and nursed her back to health. He had great reverence for the Bible. If we could show from the Word of God that the course he was pursuing was not right, he was not disposed to justify himself for doing the wrong.

As a man of business he was shrewd. He inherited from his father a small piece of land, valued at \$100 or \$150. The office of Naidu realized him \$50 annually. With this capital stock to begin with he accumulated property which now yields an annual income of about \$400, which is equivalent to \$8,000 at 5 per cent. In his last will, which he made one week before his death, he bequeathed one-fourth of his estate, \$2,000, to our Foreign Mission Board for the purpose of carrying on the work of education and evangelization of the people of his own and the neighboring villages. This is the first bequest from a native which has been given our work. Considering the value of the estate the gift is a liberal one. The greatest encouragement from the gift lies in the fact that it has been demonstrated that the sons of India through the grace of God can be made to be interested in the highest welfare of their fellow countrymen to the extent of liberal giving.

A single glance at the face of our departed brother will suffice to show that he is not a member of an inferior race. You see in him a sample of millions of his countrymen. The Hindu are a people of splendid natural talents. Their powers have been misdirected all too long. The light of modern life is beginning to dawn upon them. The great sleeping giant is beginning to move, and when fully roused will be a force to be reckoned with in the disposition of the affairs of the world.

Eleven days before his death the Naidu came to Parla Kimeddi for medical treatment. A large carbuncle had begun to form on his left shoulder. The doctor visited him daily and we did all we could to save his life. Despite our efforts he rapidly sank and passed quietly away on the evening of the 19th of October. During his last sickness he frequently told us that he was trusting in Jesus, and that he had no fear of death, and if it was God's will to take him he was ready to go. Many of his heathen relatives and friends visited him during his illness, and as far as they were able ministered to his wants. When he was gone they mourned as for one beloved. His elder sister especially manifested signs of deep grief; she bent over him and repeatedly kissed his cold forehead.

The Naidu was well known in all the villages for many miles around. The testimony we always hear concerning him is, "He was a good man." H. Y. CORRY.

Parla Kimeddi, India.

## "For God is With Us."

Blessed truth. Not only with his church as a whole, but with every individual believer who, through faith in Christ, have become sons of God. How emphatic is the sentence: "God is with us."

The great enemy of our souls, assisted by the unbelief that lurks to a greater or less extent in every human heart, would rob us of the peace that flows from the conscious possession of this great truth, but, nevertheless, the Word of God abideth steadfast, and notwithstanding fears and doubtings, the fact still remains—"God is with us."

What an inspiration there is in the very thought! "God is with us."

Here in a few words is a guarantee of provision for the future. The child holding his father's hand on a dark night in a lonely country road, is but a faint picture of our lonely walk through life. The father is anxious to get the child home for storm clouds are gathering, and already the big rain drops are falling. So there may not be many words spoken, but there is deep love and perfect confidence. The child has hold of its father's hand, and never for one moment doubts his safety. Nor is this confidence misplaced. The welcome light is just ahead, and a few more steps and they are at home.

You and I, dear reader, are in that position. The road of life is before us, and much of it must be trodden in the dark. Keep touch with the Father, for every inch of the way is known to Him. Trials and sorrows there will be, for life is made up of such, but the consciousness of God's presence with us will do more than all else on earth or in heaven to lighten them—and, blessed truth, the lights of home are just ahead.

So, with this knowledge on our hearts as well as in our heads as well as in our feet, let us take courage as we step on in the year just commenced.

Havelock, N. B.

FREDERICK T. SNELL.